



THE STUDENT'S DREAM.

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A HOROSCOPE OF MENTAL GROWTH,
CONTAINING A METAPHYSICAL
DISCOVERY.



THE STUDENT'S DREAM.

DURING the past summer, a student from one of our Eastern Colleges visited the Catskill Mountains. While wandering through the famed "Sleepy Hollow" region he stopped to rest, and falling asleep, the faint states of his consciousness described the following dream :

He dreamt that he slept for fifty years, and awakening, found that he had neither advanced in age nor wisdom. Realizing that the scenes of his former days would

be strange to him, and that his friends had changed or gone, he determined to take up the thread of his career in a new country.

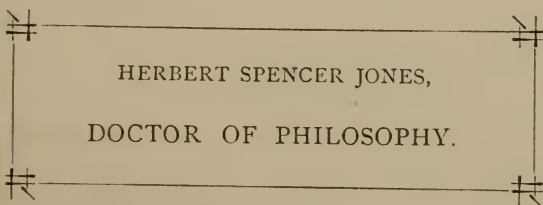
He reasoned that the tide of knowledge took its course from East to West, and that if he were to travel in the same direction he might readjust himself to the mental world. With this purpose in view he boarded a western bound train, relying upon his intuitions as to the place at which he would stop.

As the States of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio passed beneath his feet, he began to regain confidence; and feeling that he had crossed a sufficient number of meridians of longitude to re-adjust

those intellectual relations with society which time had reversed, he alighted in a small town in Indiana.

In considering the manner in which he could best serve the community, and gain a livelihood, he hit upon the plan of realizing a constant ambition of his youth, and decided to establish himself as a Doctor of Philosophy.

Without loss of time he had a modest sign inscribed :



and securing an appropriate office on the
B

principal thoroughfare, he betook himself to forming those powerful generalizations which have always distinguished the members of his newly adopted profession.

While thus engaged, an agriculturist presented himself at the door, with the remark, that he had observed the sign and made up his mind that the Doctor was just the man he was looking for.

“Ah!” said the Doctor; “come in, sir; won’t you be seated?”

The farmer accepted the invitation, and the following conversation ensued:

“Pray, sir, what is the nature of your difficulty?”

“ Well, I want you to tell me how large this Universe is, and how long it is going to last ; how old it is ; where it got the capital to start business with, and what it is going to do when it gets through business. Now, don't tell me it had no capital to start with, because then we will only disagree on the meaning of words. The material on hand I call capital. Now where did this capital come from, and about how much did it start with? ”

“ Are there many people in your neighborhood troubled with this same difficulty? ”

“ No ; not many. Most of them have their minds all settled on these questions, but I got left a little on education. That

is, I did not go to school much. Had to pick up as I could what I know."

"You mean, then, that your neighbors in the country have, as a rule, passed through the sphere of thought in which you are at present involved, and that almost any one in your section is able to answer the questions which you have just propounded?"

"Oh my, yes! but you see the Squire tells me that I haven't the mental structure necessary to comprehend the current Theory of the Universe, and that's why I'm so mixed."

"Who is the 'Squire?'"

"Oh, he's what they call the best man

in our Metaphysic Bee. There's lots of men in the towns know more than he does; but he's pretty well up, they say. He reads the books and papers, and keeps posted."

"What did you say just now? '*Metaphysic Bee*,'—what's that?"

"Why, that's our 'Bee.' They say, in olden times, when people had less mind, they used to have spelling-schools and debating societies. Now some folks say *this* name is old, and want to call it 'The Society for the promotion of Definite Culture.'"

"What do you do in this Bee?"

"Oh! *I* don't say anything. They say

my questions were settled long ago, and I must study before speaking. There is a German there calls himself a 'Kantist,' but they say he is very much off. Then there's an old maid, who calls herself a follower of 'Spencer.' Some one told her, the other night, that she might follow Spencer, but she could not lead that society until she showed some sympathy with modern ideas. By the way, you are a 'Spencer;' was he any relation of yours?"

"No: my father recognized him as one of the intellectual giants of his time, and named me after him."

"Well, the Squire says Spencer came very near the truth. That he established

the doctrine of evolution firmly among the people, and gave them a frame-work of thought to which all new discoveries seem to belong. And now, instead of truth disturbing the people, it is received with hospitality and applause."

"I could say all that, and much more of Spencer, but your case does not permit the digression. Now, tell me what they call 'the current theory of the Universe' among your people. What do they call modern ideas? Does not your old maid friend defend Spencer's position successfully?"

"Ah! I perceive your method of teaching. You are trying to draw me out, and

then you are going to show me how to put the materials I have together. The Squire has often tried this; in fact, they have all tried it, but they say I am a hard case. Since you make a business of philosophy, however, you may have better success."

"Well, answer as concisely as you can the questions just asked you."

"I can repeat what I have heard. The Kantist told me when I asked him the same questions I asked you about the beginning and end of things, that in order to answer such questions, it would be necessary to comprehend the meaning of Space and Time. And that as these words represent states of mind only and



not anything that exists outside of the mind, it is like trying to lift the chair you sit in to comprehend them. Miss W. says, under the authority of Spencer, that Space and Time are not states of the mind, but *external* realities. But, as Space is infinite or unlimited, and the mind limited, and as Time is absolute or unconditioned, and the mind conditioned, we cannot form a definite conception of either. That the nearest we can come to understanding them is that we have a vague consciousness of these great realities. Then she goes on to say that the 'deepest knowable cause' is 'the persistence of force,' and that we cannot penetrate any farther than this

toward a comprehension of the beginning of phenomena."

"Do not these explanations satisfy you? They are certainly very lucid."

"What, lucid! A vague consciousness of Space and Time; the persistence of force, lucid? No, sir! I want the thing itself; no make-shifts for me."

"Well! you are certainly rather exacting in such matters, for a farmer."

"No. They call me stupid and obstinate down at the society; at least, they mean as much, as you will see by a letter the 'Squire wrote me the other day. Here it is."

The Doctor opened the letter, and read as follows :

DEAR MR. B:

Upon thinking over what happened the other evening at our society, I feel compelled, as its president, to make you some apology.

There is something touching in the earnestness and constancy with which you propound your standard questions regarding the begining and end of things ; but there is also something provoking in your steady failure to entertain the solutions of these questions which have been so consistently offered you. *Will you ever learn*, that the words beginning and end do not represent ultimate realities, but

simply *relations*, which have for their terms other relations? They cannot be used in the *absolute* sense, since they are *relative* in their nature.

In a word, there is no *absolute* beginning or end, and you have no right to insist that there is.

This is why our society does not permit you to debate, for they insist that their time cannot be justly taken up by one who either lacks the ability or industry to master his primer in metaphysics.

You have had too many proofs of my friendship to mistake this well-meant and necessary severity for unkindness.

You may not be to blame for your failure to construct a rational theory of

the Universe, although I must say, that I have never known a case in which an individual in your position could hold his ancestors entirely responsible for his misfortune.

If you would patiently accumulate knowledge and thus form a mental structure capable of apprehending some of the cardinal truths which all phenomena are constantly forcing upon us, then, with the aid of those who are better trained in making generalizations, you would soon be enabled to establish some harmony between your consciousness and those ultimate truths which you so impotently reach after.

It would then be less painful and futile
E

to talk to you ; and then, and not until then, can your best friends help regarding you with a sort of pity.

Now, my dear friend, either relinquish the controversy or fit yourself for it. Read the best authors upon the subjects in question half an hour before breakfast regularly. During the day think over what you have read. By establishing this habit, your aggressive curiosity, which only serves to make your shortcomings conspicuous, could be utilized as a powerful element in your intellectual growth.

VERY TRULY YOURS,

A. V.

ATHENS, IND.,

JULY 10TH, 1931.

P. S.

I enclose a brief synopsis of the position of our society with regard to ultimate truth ; also a little diagram, to help you to understand the note attached. This, of course, is but a faint reflection of the larger and more definite comprehension of the subject, enjoyed by the learned men and women of our day.

SYNOPSIS.

Without going into a definition of life, which would necessitate an extended examination of this aspect of general phenomena, suffice it to say that Life is a

Relation, having for its terms subjective and objective relations.

That the Ultimate Relation is Motion, the terms of which are Space and Time.

That all phenomena manifest this relation in different degrees of complexity.

In this Trinity of Realities, we have the source of all.

The progress of knowledge has had its concomitant discoveries of the endless harmonies pervading all phenomena, and it is still the task of Science to unveil new harmonies, while it is that of Religion to form from this Anthem of the Universe higher and higher ideals of life, until the sweetness and grandeur of its strains compel the love and worship of mankind.

Thus, we have before us the sublime mystery of the Unknowable, known to us in its ultimate relation, but unsuspected in its possibilities and unspeakable history.

The silent lapse of Time, unmeasured and undivided Space, join in rythmical Motion, with equal method in forming the life of a flower, and that of a system having for its units suns. And the destiny of each falls alike into the lap of Eternity, unregistered save by the progress it has made.

NOTE.—It is probably unnecessary for me to say that the harmonizing of Ultimate Knowledge, which has enabled us to take

this position, dates from the discovery that Force and Time are words which stand for the same reality, and that Matter and Space are synonymous terms.

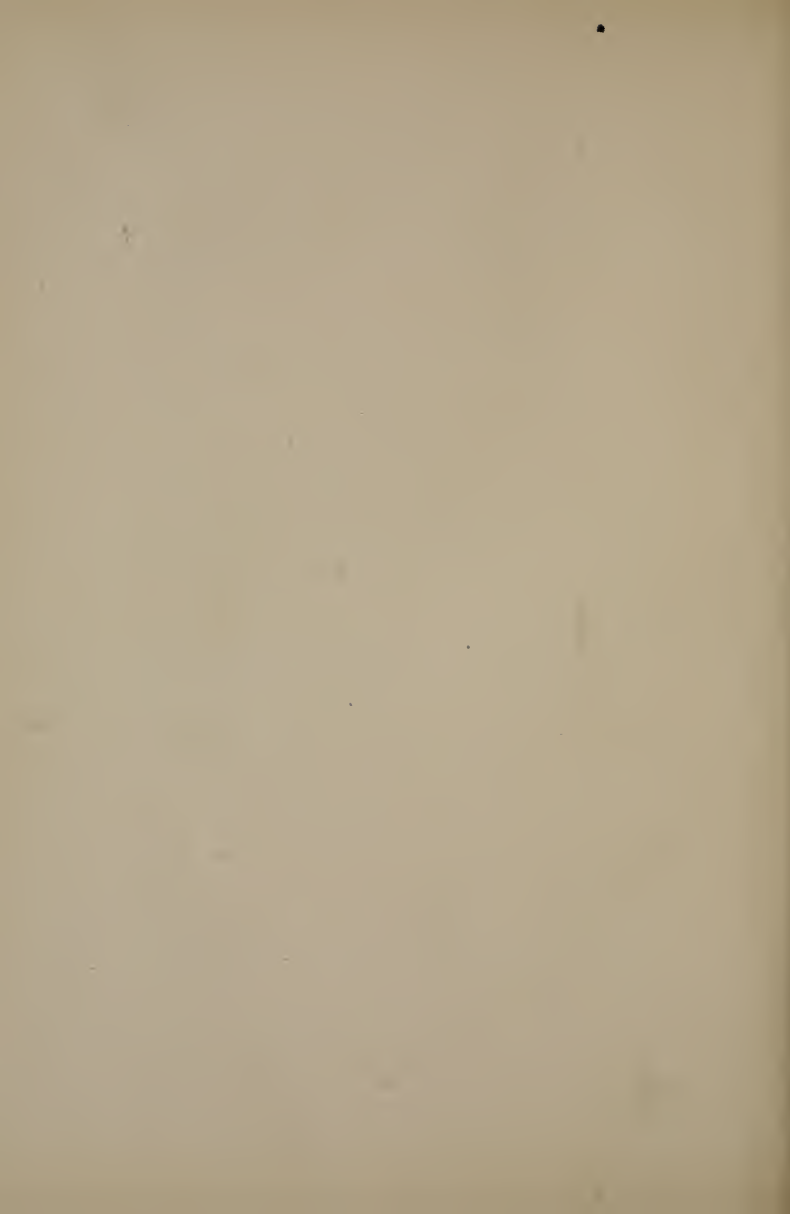
The great Spencer, whose superb system has made him immortal, whose tireless generalizations brought the world to its senses, and whose masterly classifications of phenomena laid the foundations of the definite culture enjoyed by our age, paved the way to this discovery.

His description of the genesis of our idea of Space; the oscillations of consciousness between coexistent points of resistance reached by primeval perception, and the previous knowledge that unoccu-

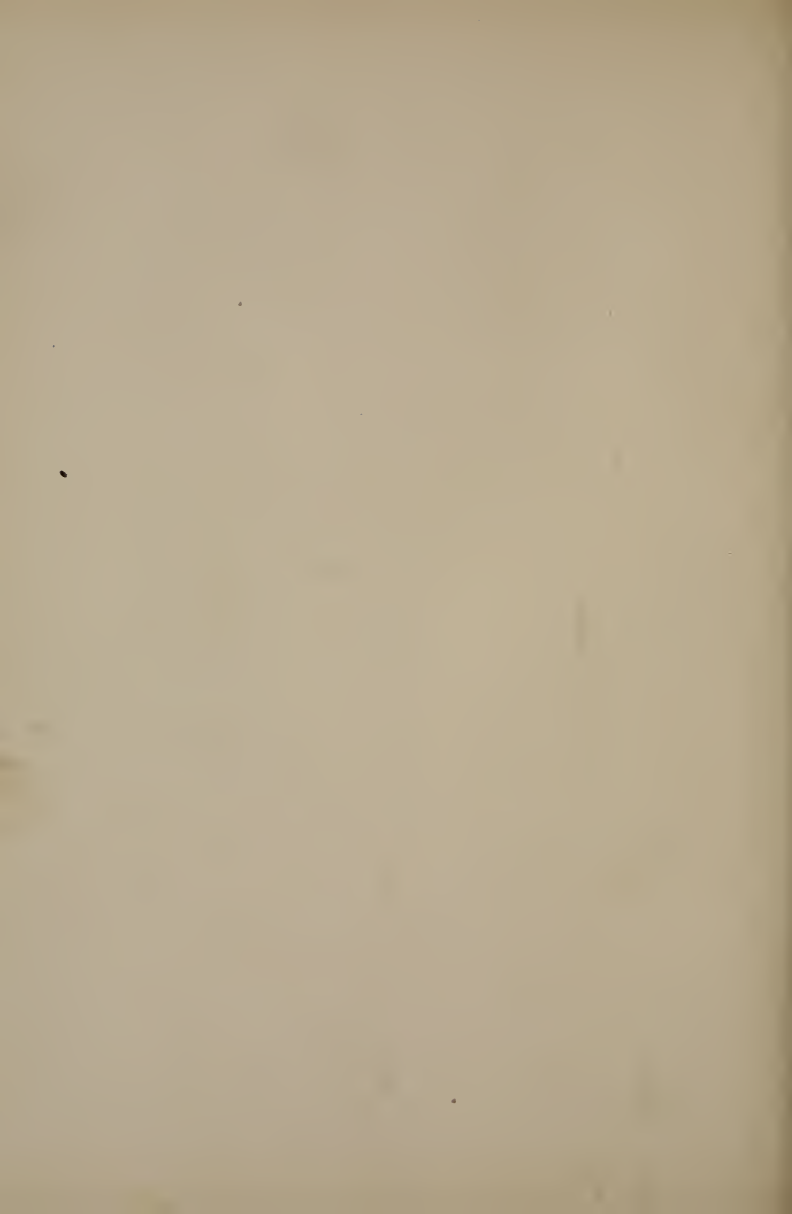
pied space is inconceivable, disclosed the identity of Matter, Coexistence and Space.

His definition of the "deepest knowable cause," the "persistence of force," pointed to the fact that our idea of Force, when separated from that of Matter or Space, ceases to be an idea of Motion, and becomes the subjective portrayal of abstract Sequence or Time.

Since, therefore, a mind, fifty years ago climbed to a point of discovery with the aid of a single system, for at the time this discovery was made, Spencer's was the only system in existence which could lay any claim to both completeness and rational truth, how much more should



you be able to comprehend the situation, when not only has the work been done, but you have a choice of systems to assist you.



Religious.

THE INFINITE
OR UNLIMITED,

THE ABSOLUTE
OR UNCONDITIONED,

||

||

Philosophical.

MATTER

FORCE

||

||

COEXISTENCE.

SEQUENCE.

||

||

Popular.

SPACE.

TIME.



MOTION.

THE ULTIMATE REALITIES AND THEIR
RELATION.

The Doctor refolded the letter, and putting it into his pocket, said: "In the language of the bench, Sir, I take the papers and reserve my decision. There is something very interesting in your case. In a word, it needs study. I am free to say, however, that thus far I see no reason for you to diverge from the line of advice furnished by your friend the Squire. When you come to town again, Sir, I shall be happy to see you."

With this the farmer withdrew; and scarcely had the door closed behind him, when the student heaved such a sigh of relief that he awoke, with the exclamation on his lips: "How very near I came to letting that farmer discover my ignorance."

APPENDIX.

It would have been a contradiction to have written a preface to the foregoing, the manifest design of which is to lead the reader into the difficulties of metaphysics with as little warning as possible, so that he may judge for himself whether the effort to master this much neglected science is what so many have declared it to be—a hopeless undertaking.

It may not be amiss, however, to add a few words, in order to carry further some

of the thoughts which the argument suggests.

If Life is a relation between that of which life is ascribed and that which is external to it, the very word Relation helps us to overcome the natural but erroneous supposition that there is an absolute dividing line between the mystic phases of existence which fall under this broad title of life, and that which surrounds them.

Spencer's definitions of life hinge upon the terms *adjustment** and "*in correspondence with*."† In these definitions he postulates re-

* "An *adjustment* of inner to outer relations."

† "The definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, *in correspondence with* external co-existences and sequences.

The boundary line between life and its surroundings is quite apparent in organic life. It is the "limiting membrane" which Spenser calls the "first principle" of this kind of life. But when we seek for this boundary in super-organic life, it

spectively an "inner" and "outer," an "internal" and "external," and in the longer of the two he describes the nature of the subjective changes in space and time, which, being *related* to the objective changes in space and time, fulfill the conditions of life.

A glance at the position demonstrates the justice of calling life a Relation; for, not only do the facts of the case justify the word, but the difference between the terms "adjustment" and "correspondence" is paramount, to the difference between adjustment and relation, and the longer of Spencer's definitions is conceded to be the more accurate throughout.

becomes so indistinct that we are forced to the conclusion that it is relative in its nature, which means that it is in itself a relation, and perhaps the best designation for it is, the relation of differentiation. The degree of correspondence between this relation and that of life, I leave to future reflection to determine.

The greatest difficulty which the student of psychology encounters is the necessity of shaking off the common conviction that there is something within us which is absolutely complete in itself: a point or boundary where the ego ceases and the non-ego begins. Not until we can master this weakness of perception—not until we can understand that all forms

of life perceived by us are incomplete in the sense that they are but parts of a whole, can we gain even an approximate idea of the infinite and absolute inter-dependence of all phenomena.

When we examine the phenomena of human activities from this standpoint, the concrete dividing lines which apparently separate the physical, the mental, the moral and the spiritual, melt away.

There is such a thing as unconscious or nascent knowledge. The difference between it and conscious knowledge is vaguely indicated by the words capacity and acquirements. The development of the intelligence of some children is too startling not to have drawn general atten-

tion to this fact. Knowledge admits of every possible degree. The schools in which it is acquired are co-extensive with the time and space of life. From the infant's smile of recognition to the last glance which the old man casts upon this restless world, it is gathered and organized in the mind. The sequences of mental growth are just as clearly maintained through the course of heredity as are those of physical structure, for a deep view of both shows that they are one.

That the degree of life attained by the human being corresponds with the amount of knowledge developed, is becoming an acknowledged fact. The exceptions to this rule disappear when we group lives

in space and time to allow for the irregularities of action and reaction. From the dawning sentiency of the primeval types of organic life, to the perceptions which are the fruit of patient life-times of mental relationing in our race, knowledge is the same in nature and differs but in degree. It is the establishment of relations between a life and the universe, and the degree of that life depends upon the degree of those relations.

If life is knowledge, knowledge being a relation, the subjective and objective terms of which are the creature and the universe, perhaps it is not too soon in the course of these reflections to state that there is no absolute dividing line between

the spiritual and the material, the heavenly and the earthly, these being but the higher and lower aspects of life. Those who will take the trouble to follow out Spencer's description of the gradual and intermingled growth of feelings, sentiments and thought, will clearly perceive that religion in man, which is largely a sentiment, is elevated and purified in proportion to the true enlightenment of the mind. That it is one of the great realities of life, a form of nascent and conscious knowledge. The grand perspectives of the future which this sentiment supplies, are the chords of feeling which great truths awaken in us long before we have the power to understand them. The sum

of human knowledge formed from the savings of the past and handed down through the mystic channels of sequential life, is the index of the progress of our race. There is something so real in this progress that we are wooed into believing ourselves immortal.

If we are forms of space and time, the indestructible and eternal joining in our existence; if the primordial simplicity of that existence is motion and its complexity, life, knowledge, progress, then it is as certain that there is a sequel to our lives as that there is a past. The farthest ends of the universe proclaim the ceaseless course of progress; this great stream with its currents and coun-

ter-currents, sweeps on to the future, and as surely as we are floating upon its bosom, conscious of its motion, a sequel of the past, so surely shall we re-appear upon the surface of these waters in forms of higher life.

If knowledge is the reality of life; if all the phases of our existence, from the physical to the spiritual, are forms of knowledge, the instructors of society hold a sacred trust. Upon their just appreciation of the great truths of life depends the real value of their instruc-

If the "universal postulate" has been found; if that upon which every proposition relies for ultimate proof is the "inconceivableness of its negation," then that we are forms of space and time, and that motion is the deepest knowable cause, is a safe position.

tion, if not in the broadest sense its success or failure.

Teachers, college professors, ministers and priests, are public people, discharging public trusts, and our right to criticise them depends entirely upon whether they avail themselves of the material at their command to do their duty. The widest and deepest information which the age affords, constitutes this material, and it is their duty to conform their instructions, according to the measure of their ability, to this natural word of God.

The sweet exemption from the toil of aggressive thought, which so many of them claim as the consequence of a belief in divinely imposed barriers to human

perception, comes in painful contrast with that high achievement of the conscience, manifested by many of humbler acquirements, the feeling of obligation to understand life

It is generally conceded that the wisest men have always complained the most of their ignorance. There seem to be two distinct interpretations, however, of this limitation to the intelligence. The difference between these interpretations is to be found in the distance placed between the present vantage ground of human knowledge, and that impassable boundary prescribed by the conditions of life.

One school offers to carry its pupils to

the highest stages of culture, but warns them that they must depend upon supernatural revelation for their ultimate ideas. The other regards the highest possible intellectual attainments of to-day as but the beginning of what the future promises, but declares that even at the present stage of intellectual progress, it is possible to form a plan of thought which is co-extensive with the natural boundaries of perception. That the elaboration of this plan is the work of the future, and that its growth toward perfection is part of the progress of our race. Which of these two positions constitutes the most rational interpretation of ignorance, I leave it to the reader to discern.

If any one were to offer condolence to our leading college presidents and divines, on account of the weight of ignorance under which these gentlemen toil, it is possible that the proffered sympathy would fail of that ready appreciation which an uninitiated person might expect. These instructors of the people, who formulate the thought and therefore the principles of society; are not apparently suffering from any particular remorse on account of the inefficiency of the means which they are supplying to their fellow men, of meeting the difficulties and dangers of life.

Would not a keener appreciation of the nature of ignorance widen their perspectives of available truth, and lessen their

responsibility for the failures and sorrows of life, which it is their mission to alleviate?

HAS not the time come when it is the right and duty of the religious to criticise religion? How many men and women are there in our land whose lives enable them to stand upon their faith in God, and repel the anathema of atheist and infidel with scorn, while they expose the treason to true religion, of which so many of the ordained and faithful are guilty? This treason consists in suppressing the understanding by teaching superstition.

No one who has made a serious study of morality, can doubt that it is, not only injudicious but wrong to deprive people

of that inherited feeling of obligation to do right which in our race is inseparable from some degree of religious faith. The only thing which can lessen our dependence upon this feeling, is an appreciation of the effects of conduct, and an education of the higher sympathies, which amount in themselves to the most exalted attainments of the human mind. Appreciating these truths, can any one name an acquaintance who is independent of the saving influence of religion, who would not be benefited in some degree by kneeling in spirit before the Great Unknowable, and joining occasionally, from however high a plane, in that worship which is the common impulse of mankind? Are

there any so wise and good that they cannot feel a sympathy with the humblest and most ignorant human being who supplicates a Deity for help to lead a better life? Such arguments as these are all that religion requires to commend it to those who have the true interest of their race at heart.

Conceding that religion is necessary to assist us to live as we should, no one will deny that it is necessary to adjust religion to the intelligence of those whom it is intended to govern. This adjustment is going on unobtrusively, but none the less surely, and those who look deeply into the actions and re-actions which mark its course, will recognize the fallacy

of encouraging darkness as a means of doing good.

Young men and women are growing up all over our land who are in possession of facts which, if construed by the same methods of reasoning which enable them to maintain their standing as intelligent people, would shake to the very center the antiquated theologies which are so persistently offered them.

Does any one suppose that the untruths of religion are essential to its success? To believe this would be to shut the eyes to the real strength which has enabled the church to withstand for ages the assaults of those who in their zeal to criticise, failed to perceive its usefulness.

Are the attributes of God less faithfully portrayed by the wonders of evolution than by the cosmogony of the book of Genesis? Is the world any the less a world because it was thrown off from the sun, and required untold ages to cool, than if it had been called into the very questionable state of perfection which Moses describes, during the uncertain period which elapsed between Sunday morning and Friday night? Is our debt to God for existence less manifest in tracing the patient sequences of organic life to our present structure, than in supposing that the ignorance and frailties of six thousand years ago were selected as a starting point for the evolution of our

race? Pity it were indeed had religion to depend upon such positions as these for its usefulness and truth.

It may be asked, what theology would you offer in place of that which you find fault with? The reply is this: The chief feature of progress is specilization. In olden times the people looked to their priests for all knowledge. To use a familiar illustration, the Old Testament is a selection from a collection of writings which was to the Jews their entire literature. It comprised their civil and religious law, their history, biography, cosmogony, philosophy and theology. In our age whole libraries are content to devote their shelves to any one of these spe-

cialties. That which stands for religion, to-day, is not the history and science which was a part of it in the past, but that tendency to do justice to others which accompanies the reverence of an unknown and almighty power: The idealization of love of our fellow-men, which is incident to the love of God. The power of religion does not lie in its interpretation of the universe, but in the fact that it represents the chief need of man, an aspiration for a higher life.

The power which brought us into being, and to which we confide our destiny, is what men call God. The colors in which we paint the Great Unknowable are indicative of the height to

which our ideas of the unchangeable and eternal have attained. Those who would deprive this highest conception of the warmth and glow of human attributes, should remember that in this garb alone is it visible to the multitude as yet.

The conflict is not between science and religion, but between certain scientists and priests. The scientist who joins in this conflict, should remember that it might require a great deal to make him religious, and the priest who answers him might be convinced that at least an equal effort on his part would be necessary to make him scientific.

The true philosopher who has been the peace-maker of all ages, should endeavor

to join the hands of these respective champions of progress and purity, and remind them that their callings were once united in the life of the monk in his cell, who, unencouraged by the world, worshipped his God and toiled to acquire knowledge; that in gratitude for the patience and devotion of these good men of old, they should endeavor to respect and appreciate the truths which each possess, and for the sake of humanity, live and work in unison and peace.

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